

REMARKS**Summary of the Office Action**

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 0 935 123 to Ichiro et al. (hereinafter "Ichiro").

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,112,174 to Wakisaka et al. (hereinafter "Wakisaka").

Claims 5-7 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 8-11 are allowed.

Claim 8 is objected to for a particular alleged informality.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have amended claim 8 to improve the form of the claim. Independent claim 12 has been amended to depend from independent claim 10. Accordingly, claims 1-12 remain presently pending for consideration.

Objection to Claim 8

Claim 8 is objected to for a particular alleged informality. In particular, at page 4 of the Office Action, an indication is made that "the statement 'the similar pieces of ... information' lacks antecedent basis in the claim." Applicants have amended claim 8 to improve the form of the claim by changing "the similar pieces" to --similar pieces-- in line 16 of claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claim 8 is respectfully requested.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ichiro. The Office Action alleges that all of the features of independent claim 1 are disclosed in Ichiro for the reasons set forth at page 2 of the Office Action. However, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection at least because Ichiro does not teach, or even suggest, all of the features of independent claim 1, as originally filed. For example, independent claim 1 specifically recites a speech recognition apparatus combination that includes the feature that "reference speech information representative of hierarchical-level skipping is prepared in a predetermined speech recognition dictionary..." At least these particular features of independent claim 1 are not disclosed, nor even suggested, at the portions of Ichiro cited at page 2 of the Office Action, or any other portion of Ichiro.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully asserts that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn because Ichiro does not teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 1. As pointed out in MPEP § 2131, "[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim." Thus, "[a] claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.

Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. Of California, 2 USPQ 2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987)."

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully asserts that dependent claims 2-4 are allowable at least because of the dependence from independent claim 1, and the reasons set forth above.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Wakisaka. Independent claim 12 has been amended to depend from independent claim 10, which has been indicated as allowed at page 4 of the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully asserts that dependent claim 12 is allowable at least because of the dependence from independent claim

10, and the Office Action's indication of allowable subject matter in independent claim 10.

Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that Wakisaka does not teach or suggest at least the claimed feature of independent claim 10 of "reference speech information representative of hierarchical-level skipping."

The Examiner is thanked for the indication at page 4 of the Office Action that claims 5-7, while objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. However, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 5-7 are allowable at least because of the dependence from independent claim 1, and the reasons set forth above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claims 5-7 is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication at page 4 of the Office Action that claims 8-11 are allowed.

Conclusions

In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejections and objections and allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if any issues remain unresolved, if further clarification is desired, or if the application would otherwise benefit from an interview.

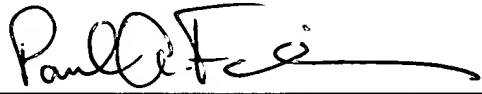
If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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